

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-16 (Canceled)

17. (Currently amended) The process for producing food and beverage products according to claim 31 ~~[[16]]~~, wherein the malt sprouts of controlled particle size are either uncrushed or crushed at a low degree of crushing.

18. (Canceled) The process for producing food and beverage products according to claim 16, comprising the further step of immersing the malt sprouts in a liquid to allow components of the malt sprouts to seep out into the liquid.

19. (Currently amended) The process for producing food and beverage products according to claim 31 ~~[[18]]~~, comprising the step of removing the malt sprouts after the immersion step.

20. (Currently amended) The process for producing food and beverage products according to claim 31 ~~[[18]]~~, wherein the particle size of the malt sprouts is controlled to a degree at which the seeping out of the component of the malt sprouts responsible for an unpleasant flavor is limited in the immersion step.

21. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ [[A]] process for producing food and beverage products according to claim 31, ~~[[using malt sprouts of controlled particle size,]]~~ wherein 60wt% or less of the malt sprouts are of a particle size smaller than 150 $\mu$ m.

22. (Currently amended) The [[A]] process for producing food and beverage products according to claim 31, [[using malt sprouts of controlled particle size,]] wherein the malt sprouts used have a specific surface area of  $1.90\text{m}^2/\text{g}$  or less.

23. (Currently amended) The [[A]] process for producing food and beverage products according to claim 31, [[using malt sprouts of controlled particle size,]] wherein the malt sprouts used have a bulk density of 0.37 or less.

24. (Currently amended) The process for producing food and beverage products according [[to any one of claims [[16]] 17, 20, 21, 22, and 23, and 31, wherein the food and beverage product is a beverage product, a food product or an immersion liquid.

25. (Previously presented) The process for producing food and beverage products according to claim 24, wherein the beverage product is an alcoholic beverage or a non-alcoholic beverage.

26. (Previously presented) The process for producing food and beverage products according to claim 25, wherein the alcoholic beverage is beer, happoshu (low-malt beer beverage), liquor, low-alcohol malt beverage, liqueur, whiskey or shochu.

27. (Previously presented) The process for producing food and beverage products according to claim 26, wherein the amount of the malt sprouts used is 0.1 to 30wt% with respect to the amount of the other materials of the beverage other than water and hop.

28. (Previously presented) The process for producing food and beverage products according to claim 27, wherein the alcoholic beverage is beer, happoshu or low-alcohol malt beverage.

29. (Previously presented) The process for producing food and beverage products

according to claim 25, wherein the non-alcoholic beverage is a soft drink, a tea beverage or a milk beverage.

30. (Currently amended) A food and beverage product, obtained by the process according to any one of claims [[16]] 17, 20, 21, 22, [[and]] 23, and 31.

31. (New) A process for producing food and beverage products using malt sprouts, wherein the food and beverage products do not have the unpleasant taste characteristic of malt sprouts, comprising:

- a) obtaining a collection of malt sprouts of a controlled particle size;
- b) immersing the collection of malt sprouts in a liquid for a period of time to allow components of the malt sprouts to seep into the liquid thereby producing an immersion liquid.

32. (New) A process for producing food and beverage products using malt sprouts, wherein the food and beverage products do not have the unpleasant taste characteristic of malt sprouts, comprising:

- a) obtaining a collection of malt sprouts of controlled particle size, wherein 60 wt% or less of the particles are smaller than 150  $\mu\text{m}$ ;
- b) immersing the collection of malt sprouts in a liquid for a period of time to allow components of the malt sprouts to seep into the liquid thereby producing an immersion liquid; and
- c) using the immersion liquid to produce a food or beverage product without the unpleasant taste characteristic of malt sprouts.

33. (New) A process for producing food and beverage products using malt sprouts, wherein the food and beverage products do not have a unpleasant taste characteristic of malt sprouts, comprising:

- a) obtaining a collection of malt sprouts, selected from the group consisting of

crushed malt sprouts, uncrushed malt sprouts and a mixture of crushed and uncrushed malt sprouts, wherein the malt sprouts are of controlled particle size wherein 60 wt% or less of the particles are smaller than 150  $\mu\text{m}$  and have a specific surface area of  $1.90\text{m}^2/\text{g}$  or less;

b) immersing the collection of malt sprouts in a water-based liquid for a period of time to allow components of the malt sprouts to seep into the water-based liquid thereby producing an immersion liquid;

c) removing solids from the immersion liquid using techniques well known in the food and beverage field; and

d) using the immersion liquid to produce a food or beverage product without the unpleasant taste characteristic of malt sprouts.